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Message Text

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY TELAVIV
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR SY
SUBJ: SYRIAN PRESS SUMMARY

SUMMARY: SYRIAN PRESS CLAIMS WIDESPREAD ARAB SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENTS AND CONTINUES TO STRESS THAT AGREEMENT STRENGTHEN ARAB WAR-MAKING CAPABILITY AS WELL AS COMMON PEACE STRATEOY. FRONT PAGES GIVE HEAVY PLAY TO FLURRY OF INTER-ARAB CONTACTS IN WAKE OF AGREEMENTS. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL TAKES ISSUE WITH WESTERN PRESS WHICH SEES ONLY MOVE TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS IN RECENT ACCORDS, CAUTIONING THAT THIS ONLY ONE LIMITED ASPECT OF AGREEMENTS AND WARNING THAT SUCH AGREEMENTS HAVE AN ENTIRE RANGE OF UTILITY IN ACHIEVING SYRIAN GOALS INCLUDING MILITARY OPTION. PM'S VISIT TO ROMANIA AT HEAD OF ECONOMIC-TECHNICAL DELEGATION ALSO ON ALL FRONT PAGES. AL-THAWRA CLAIMS TO
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SEE DELAYING TACTICS IN ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S RESIGNATION.

1. SYRIAN NEWSPAPERS PREDICTABLY HEADLINE GENERAL ARAB WELCOME FOR SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN SOLIDARITY. AL-BAATH HEADLINES "WIDE-SPREAD ARAB SATISFACTION" WITH RESULTS OF ASAD-SADAT MEETINGS. AL-THAWRA CLAIMS "ARAB

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POPULAR AND POLITICAL QUARTERS AND INFORMATION MEDIA REGARD ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFIED POLITICAL COMMAND AS A BOOST TO SOLIDARITY AND REALIZING THE GOALS OF THE ARAB STRUGGLE". AL-BAATH ALSO GIVES PROMINENCE TO NEW SOLIDARITY AS A METHOD OF ACHIEVING EITHER PEACE OR WAR.

2. ARTICLES OF VARYING LENGTH ALSO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF WIDE-SPREAD ARAB DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY CARRYING ARTICLES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN KHADDAM-BUTROS, ARAFAT-FAHMI, AND TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN ASAD AND HUSSEIN WITH AN AGREEMENT FOR BOTH TO MEET WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEW AGREEMENT ARE ALSO GIVEN PROMINENT COVERAGE WITH ACCOLADES COMING FROM PNC CHAIRMAN FAHOUM, LEBANESE PRESIDENT SARKIS, AND A QUOTATION FROM INTERVIEW WHICH SAUDI INFORMATION MINISTER GAVE TO THE JORDANIAN NEWSPAPER AL-SHAAB STATING THAT AAUDI MILITARY CONTINGENTS ARE READY TO RETURN TO THE FRONT-LINE STATES IF CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE.

3. EGYPTIAN VP HUSNI MUBARAK IN REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY SYRIAN DAILY AL-THAWRA ABOUT WHETHER MILITARY COORDINATION IS A PART OF THE ACCORDS IS QUOTED AS SAYING "...THE CONFRONTATION STATES HAVE TO BE IN AGREEMENT WITH ONE ANOTHER POLICIALLY AND WHEN THERE IS POLITICAL AGREEMENT, MILITARY AGREEMENT INEVITABLY CONSTITUTES THE BASIC REAR SUPPORT..."

4. VISIT OF PM KHLEIFAWI AT HEAD OF ECONOMIC TECHNICAL DELEGATION VISITING ROMANIA FOR THREE DAYS IS ALSO GIVEN FRONT PAGE TREATMENT. TALKS ARE SAID TO BE IN ECONOMIC-
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FINANCIAL FIELDS. ACCOMPANYING PM ARE DEP PM FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS SHAYYA, MIN STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADI, MIN OF OIL DARWISH, MIN OF ECONOMY AND FOREIGN TRADE IMADI, MIN OF INDUSTRY SAIFO AND A NUMBER OF DEPUTY MINISTERS AND TECHNOCRATS.

5. BOTH BAATH AND THAWRA EDITORIALS SHOW SENSITIVITY TO IDEA THAT SYRIA MAY BE SOFTENING HER POSITIONS RE ISRAEL AND SEEK TO SHOW THAT AGREEMENTS HAVE MUCH WIDER UTILITY THAN MERELY PERMITTING UNIFIED ARAB POSITION IN ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAELIS. WHILE AL-BAATH CONCEDES THAT AGREEMENT HAS DIPLOMATIC IMPORT IT TAKES ISSUE WITH "SOME WESTERN NEWSPAPERS" WHICH THINK ONLY OF GENEVA WHEN ANALYZING THE AGREEMENTS. AL-BAATH SEES IN THE AGREEMENTS AN AVENUE TO MOBILIZE ARAB CAPABILITY FOR EXERTING POLITICAL PRESSURE AND, IF NECESSARY, IN CASE OF DIPLOMATIC FAILURE FOR MAKING WAR. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES BY CLAIMING THAT

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THIS AGREEMENT CLEARLY ADHERES TO THE FORMULA OF FULL WITHDRAWAL AND RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND SAYS "SUCH A GOAL MAKES ZIONIST ANXIETY LEGITIMATE BECAUSE IT MEANS FIOLING AMERICAN CAPITULATION SOLUTIONS WHICH HAVE TORN ARAB SOLIDARITY APART". THAWRA ADHERES TO A SIMILAR LINE IN ITS COMMENTARY.

6. FINALLY, IN AN EDITORIAL ALLUDING TO THE RESIGNATION OF ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT, AL-THAWRA IDICATES A JUST AND LASTING PEACE DESPITE WHAT THE PAPER CLAIMS WERE STATEMENTS BY THE INCOMING SECRETARY OF STATE TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE "ZIONISTS" IN THIS REGARD.
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